



SECONDARY TRANSITION

Graduation of Students Receiving Special Education Under IDEA

*“Transition...
Beginning with the end
in Mind!”*

*High school
graduation is a
change of
placement because
eligibility for
special education and
related services ends
when the district grants
a regular high school
diploma.*



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

opi.mt.gov

March 2010

High school graduation is a change in placement for a student with disabilities. Eligibility for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ends when the district grants a regular high school diploma. Graduation fulfills the school district's obligation to provide a free appropriate public education.

Like any other change in educational placement, graduation is subject to IDEA procedural safeguards, including prior written notice to the parents and adult student. In Montana, when a student reaches the age of 18 years, the rights formerly provided to the parent transfer to the adult student.

Before a student receives a diploma, the IEP team must meet to review the IEP to assure:

- a. the school district's graduation requirements will be met, or
- b. the student's measurable annual goals will be substantially completed, and
- c. new measurable annual goals are not needed for the coming school year.

If the IEP team determines that the student has met the district's graduation requirements, or substantially completed the measurable annual goals and does not need new measurable annual goals, then the youth would graduate.

If the IEP team determines that the student will not meet the district's graduation requirements, or substantially complete the measurable annual goals, and will need new measurable annual goals for the coming school year, then the IEP team must develop a new IEP for the next school year.

If you have questions regarding the graduation of students with disabilities, please contact your local school district at _____ or the Office of Public Instruction, Division of Special Education, at (406) 444-5661.